

9 PARK MASTER PLAN

Introduction

The Carvers Creek State Park Master Plan is a culmination of the existing conditions analysis, field work, public input, identification of park program and goals, and collaboration with N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation staff. The Carvers Creek State Park study area consists of 8,500 acres, bounded to the north, south and west by Fort Bragg and residential areas and to the east by the Cape Fear River. Long Valley Farm, the Sandhills Section, and the Cape Fear River Section form the three anchors of the park, where most of the park facilities will be developed. A trail network will create a high level of connectivity throughout the park, linking the park facilities from the west to the Cape Fear River in the southeast. The following chapter includes recommendations for the Park Master Plan, including land acquisition, natural resource protection, trail network, park themes and interpretive opportunities, park facilities, and recreational activities. The proposed Draft Park Master Plan is shown in Figure 9.1.

Land Acquisition

In order to achieve the highest level of connectivity between the park properties already owned by the state of North Carolina, further acquisition of land is expected to take place within the next 25 years. Additional land will ensure the maximum protection of plant and animal species. Since the state has purchased portions of the park property in 2006 and 2010, future acquisition has been explored to create a larger park property. Priorities for land acquisitions include areas such as large undeveloped parcels, areas of significant hydrology or geology, Red-cockaded Woodpecker habitat, examples of biological communities and natural resource areas, land within North Carolina Significant Natural Heritage Areas, and land suitable for facility development.

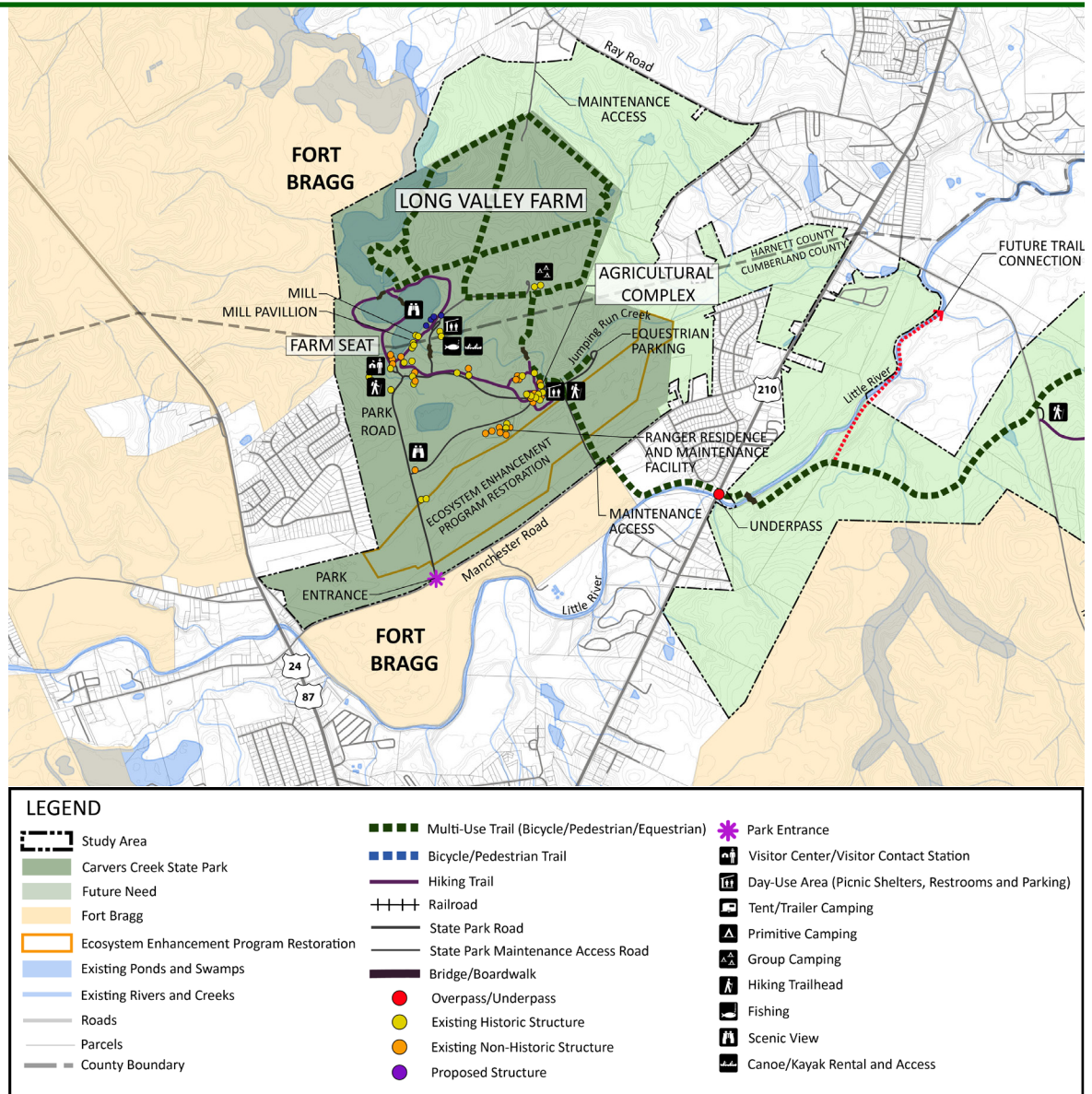
Carvers Creek State Park will continue to grow in the next 25 years in order to support the mission of the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation. These goals include conservation management, education, stewardship, and recreation.

Overall Plan

The Master Plan for Carvers Creek State Park shown in Figure 9.1 includes three main areas of development for park visitors; Long Valley Farm, the Sandhills Section, and the Cape Fear River Section. The park will be linked with a multi-use trail that connects the major facilities such as the Farm Seat and Agricultural Complex at Long Valley Farm and the Visitor Center at Sandhills. A bicycle/pedestrian trail will extend from Sandhills to the overlooks on the Cape Fear River. Approximately 22 miles of multi-use trails, four miles of bicycle and pedestrian trails, and eight miles of single-use trails are proposed throughout this park system. Trails are shown in approximate locations and the actual alignment of the trails will be determined during later phases of design. Trails will be carefully designed and maintained. Equestrians and bicyclists will not be allowed to ride off the trail.



Farm fields at Long Valley Farm under longleaf pine restoration



Other facilities will include fishing piers, a boat rental, camping areas, day-use areas, and historic buildings. Recreational opportunities include hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, picnicking, fishing, boating, camping, wildlife observation, visiting historic buildings, and experiencing life on an early 20th century scientific farm.

Long Valley Farm

The Long Valley Farm property will be used mainly for educational and historic interpretation of the agricultural and cultural significance of the site. Two main nodes of activity include the Farm Seat and the Agricultural Complex. The historic structures date from different time periods within the history of the farm, ranging from 1850 when the Mill Pavilion was constructed, the mid 1910s when Robert Wall Christian operated his scientific farm, to the late

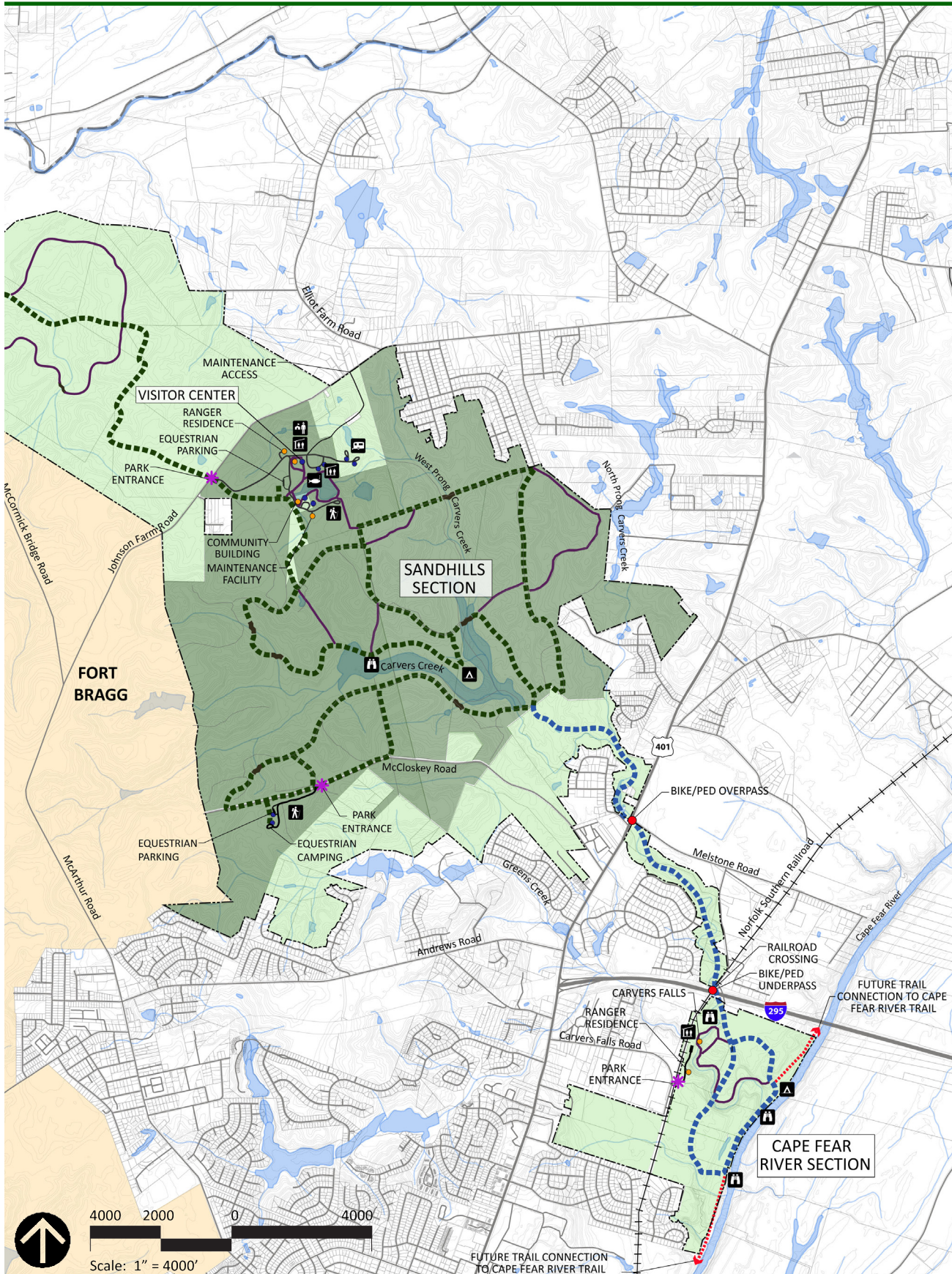


Figure 9.1 - Master Plan



Park entrance road at Long Valley Farm

1930s when James Stillman Rockefeller purchased the property for his winter residence. The internal circulation of roads and trails will link these facilities with the recreational activities that will share the space. Recreational activities include boating, fishing, bicycling, equestrian trails, hiking, picnicking, and group camping. Also important is the rich ecological diversity of this area, including the cypress-gum pond, swamps, creeks, and stands of longleaf pine undergoing restoration and fire management. See Figure 9.2 for the overall plan for Long Valley Farm, and Appendix B for an assessment of structures at Long Valley Farm.

The park entrance is located off of Manchester Road and is aligned with the existing farm road. The park visitor will see glimpses of the original farm and silo in the distance as they approach the Farm Seat. According to the previous farm manager, this was one of James Stillman Rockefeller's favorite places on the farm. Farm fences, hedgerows, and warm season grasses will be maintained to stay as accurate as possible to the farm's nationally significant history. The layout of the farm roads around the fields date to Robert Wall Christian's ownership of Long Valley Farm, and will be maintained as much as possible to keep the integrity of the farm intact. A gated maintenance road will be located south of the Agricultural Complex that leads to the Ranger's Residence, maintenance complex, and a maintenance-only access road.

Farm Seat at Long Valley Farm



Farm Seat, Rockefeller House

At the terminus of the entry drive, visitors will turn left to begin the approach to the Farm Seat. A 40-space parking lot and drop off area, a trailhead, and restrooms will be located at the Farm Seat to remain as unobtrusive as possible as well as minimize construction and clearing of the existing vegetation. From here, visitors can visit the Farm Seat and embark on a tour of the millpond, boardwalks and trails north of the parking area, or continue along a trail at the southern edge of the millpond to the Mill Pavilion and Pump House and the Mill House and gates.

Just east of the Farm Seat, a road will extend north, crossing Jumping Run Creek and connecting to a day-use area adjacent to the millpond. An 80-space parking lot will be located in an existing open field east of the millpond. See Figure 9.3. This day-use area includes a boat rental and launch, an accessible fishing pier, a restroom, a grass play area, two shelters, and a small open play area.



Mill Pavilion



Open Meadow at Long Valley Farm

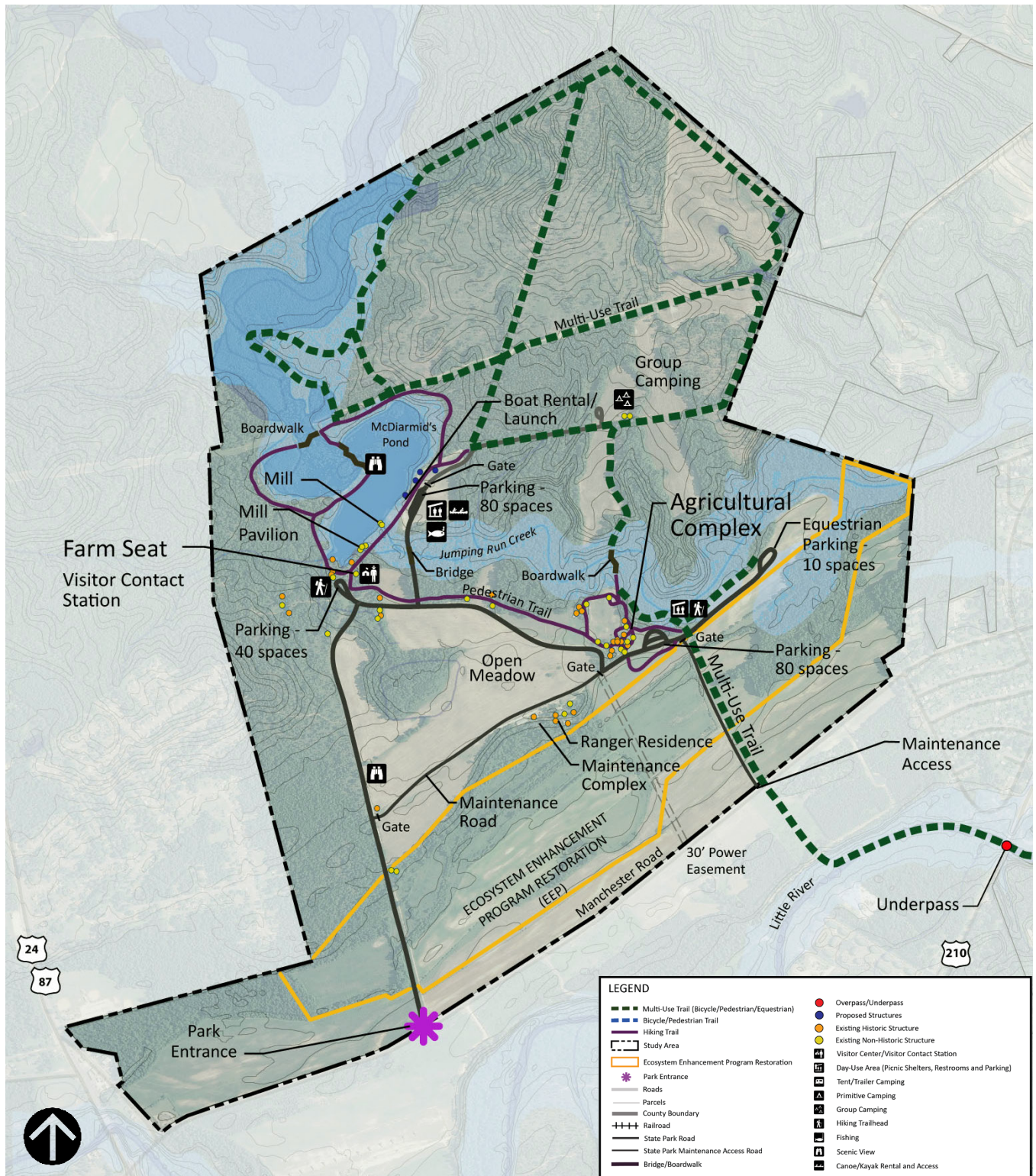


Figure 9.2 - Overall Plan - Long Valley Farm - Not to Scale



Figure 9.3 - Long Valley Farm Seat Plan - Not to Scale

Permanent camping facilities at Long Valley Farm will include group camping located in the northern pasture, past the day-use area at the millpond, as seen in Figure 9.4. A gated natural surface road will extend from the parking at the millpond for access, and terminate with a small parking area for 45 vehicles. The north pasture tobacco barns could serve as the location for restroom and shower facilities. From this location, a trail will take park visitors north to longleaf pine restoration areas.

The historic buildings at the Farm Seat include the Farm Seat or “Rockefeller House,” the Spring House, a Granary, the Mill Pavilion and Pump House, and the Mill House and gates. A complete list of structures and buildings at Long Valley Farm to remain can be found in Appendix B. A brief synopsis of the structures and their expected interpretive function is listed below:

- **Farm Seat** – This will be the site of a Visitor Contact Station, and the Rockefeller House will be restored to include office space, storage, a working kitchen, rental/meeting space, as well as restrooms on the main level. The existing floor plan of the house should be maintained as much as possible to keep the integrity of the building intact. The two largest spaces on the main floor, the former dining room and living room of the house, will serve as meeting/rental spaces. The courtyard between the two wings can serve as an outdoor space for parties or gatherings. The kitchen area will be restored as well. Exhibits and artifacts about Robert Wall Christian, James Stillman Rockefeller, Overhills, World War Two connections to the property, and Fort Bragg will be on display in the halls and in the two rental/meeting spaces. An office space and public restrooms will also be located on the main floor. Park staff will be able to see approaching visitors through windows in the office. The second story can be utilized for storage and additional office space. Visitors can relax on the shady front porch overlooking the millpond or under the shade of the historic oaks and magnolias surrounding the house.
- **Spring House** – The Spring House will be preserved for its scenic quality and visitors will also learn about ways food was stored prior to electricity.
- **Mill Pavilion, Dam Gates and Pump House** – These structures are the oldest structures on the farm, although they were modified by the Rockefellers after they purchased the property. The Mill Pavilion would be restored to be used for rentals, as a stage, as an outdoor classroom, and for scenic interpretation. The Pump House would be used for storage. Large groups of people can be accommodated in the Mill Pavilion, and it will be a popular rental spot for those who appreciate the views across the millpond and the sounds of rushing water. This is an ideal location for special events such as weddings, folk music festivals, and reunions. The McDiarmid family history and the history of Ardnave Plantation will be interpreted at this structure.
- **Mill House and gates** – The Mill House and gates will receive a historical quality renovation, but will not be restored to a functioning level. School groups and other visitors will enjoy learning about mill technology and seeing examples of milled products. Interpretive displays about the importance of a mill in rural society will be located inside the building.



Mill House and Gates



Interior of Mill House



Agricultural Complex



Great Barn and meadow



Pack House



Garden



Figure 9.4 - Long Valley Farm - Group Camping - Not to Scale

- Worker's House #1 – This building will house exhibits and displays about daily life of the community of workers on the farm. Exhibits will be viewable from the exterior through windows and doorways only.
- Worker's House #4 – This building will serve as either a ranger residence or an artist-in-residence.

Interpretive trails at the Farm Seat should be fully ADA accessible with areas for resting and include a combination of signs, displays, and actual objects that can be touched and explored. Boardwalks and overlooks will be located to take advantage of the incredibly scenic and ecologically significant cypress pond. The trails will focus on historical as well as ecological topics, such as mill technologies, reuse of building materials, sustainability in early farm operations, the longleaf pine ecosystem, woodland edge and meadow wildlife habitat, Ardnave Plantation, historic vegetation, the importance of naval stores, and the history of recreation at Long Valley Farm.

Agricultural Complex at Long Valley Farm

At the terminus of the main park entrance drive, the visitor will turn right to continue to the Agricultural Complex, a collection of structures that highlight the rich agricultural history of the property. Views of the silo, farm buildings and farm fences across warm season grasses will visually lead the visitor to the parking area located near the Great Barn. From this point, the visitor will approach the farm and encounter an informational kiosk displaying maps of the Agricultural Complex as well as interpretive information. Interpretive trails circle the Agricultural Complex and connect to the rest of the park trail system. There will be a 80-space parking lot that will also allow for a bus drop-off.

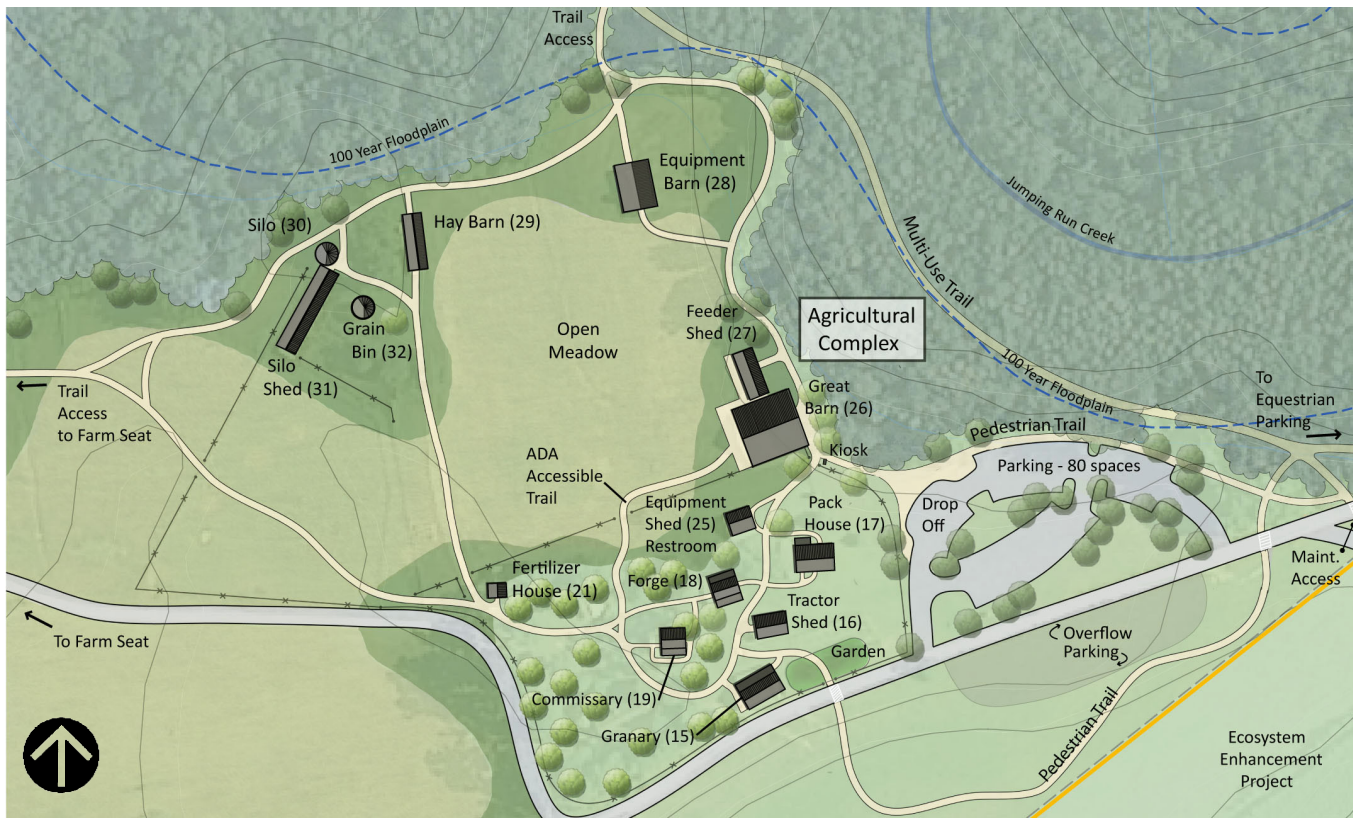


Figure 9.5 - Long Valley Farm - Agricultural Complex - Not to Scale

Overflow parking will be accommodated in a turf area to the south of the park road for special events. A ten-space equestrian parking lot and restroom for equestrian users is located past the Agricultural Complex, and the trail-head for the main multi-use trail that connects the entire park is sited here.

The Agricultural Complex (see Figure 9.5) is comprised of 14 historic and non-historic farm buildings, interpretive trails, a restroom, meadows, and a garden. The entire Agricultural Complex will be used to tell the story of Long Valley Farm, and how it evolved from Ardnave Plantation into the gentleman's farming enterprise as it exists today. Visitors will learn about daily life on a farm, the people who lived and worked here, and about farming practices then and now. Figure 9.6 shows equestrian parking near the Agricultural Complex. A complete list of structures and buildings at Long Valley Farm to remain can be found in Appendix B. A brief synopsis of the structures within the complex and their expected interpretive function is listed below:

- The Great Barn – The Great Barn is the focal point of the Agricultural Complex and is the first building that visitors will experience when arriving to this area by

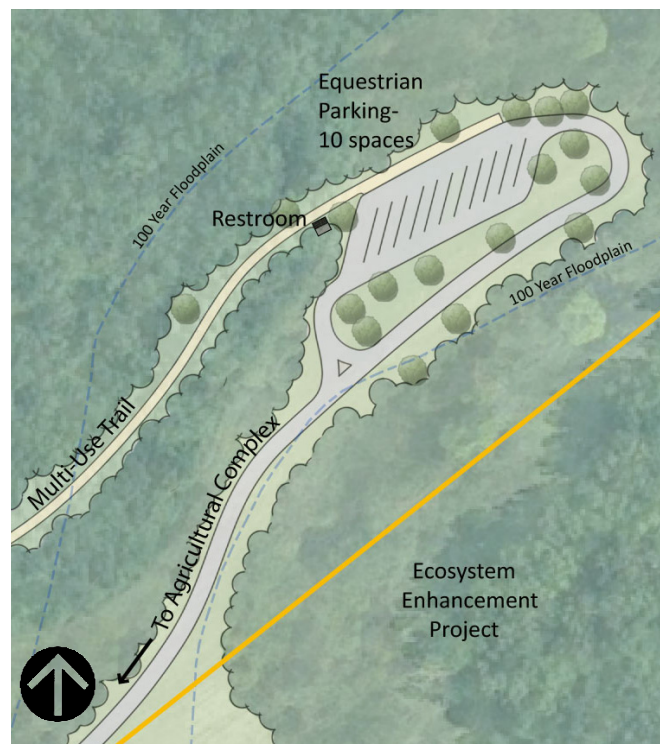


Figure 9.6 - Agricultural Complex Equestrian Parking - Not to Scale



Silo and Silo Shed



Pitcher plants at Sandhills Section

car or bus. The open air barn will accommodate large groups of school children and other visitors who will learn from educational exhibits and panels inside. Exhibits include vintage farm implements which will be placed in the rafters and along the walls, and display panels about farm animals and crops.

- Forge and Commissary – During special events, school groups and other visitors can view blacksmithing demonstrations at the Forge. The Commissary will be restored and stocked with supplies that would have been common when the farm was in operation. Visitors will learn about farm family relationships and community. External viewing only.
- Silo, Silo Shed, and Grain Bin – These iconic structures of the farm provide a strong scenic value to the farm. The Silo Shed will become a shelter for educational groups and an outdoor classroom while they learn about silage and grain. Stories from the local community could be remembered here and displayed on panels. Internal and External viewing.
- Hay Barn and Equipment Barn – An indoor primitive classroom area will be located in the Equipment Barn. Both buildings offer a scenic and pastoral quality where they are sited in the open meadow, and can be used for storage for large events. Internal and External viewing.
- Granary and Pack House – The Granary will have internal exhibits and displays about grain storage. The Pack House will have internal exhibits about tobacco storage. Both interpretive displays will be seen through the doorway and windows only. The shed roofs on both buildings will serve as small shade shelters for individual picnic sites or benches.
- Tractor Shed and Fertilizer House – The Tractor Shed will house antique farm equipment, vehicles, and other machinery for interpretation. During special events, the farm equipment, vehicles, and machinery can be brought into the adjacent field for interactive learning sessions. The Fertilizer House will offer scenic value along the entry road as an important member of the collection of farm buildings. External viewing only.
- Feeder Shed and Equipment Shed – The Feeder Shed has a 50 to 150-person capacity, which works well for school groups or reunions. Learning stations can be set up in the shelters that school groups use for organized activities. The Equipment Shed will be renovated to become a restroom.
- Garden – A small garden tended by volunteers will allow children to see, smell, touch and taste actual farm products that were once cultivated here. Another opportunity would be to rent some garden plots out to local citizens. Exhibits about scientific farming will explore Robert Wall Christian's influence on the farm.
- Meadow – The open meadow in the center of the Agricultural Complex includes some areas that are mown regularly and some areas that are mown once or twice a year to maintain the scenic quality of the farm. The meadow will be a wonderful place for open play, family picnics, and large group activities.

The State Historic Preservation Office has identified the following structures as having contributing historic resources to Long Valley Farm: Farm Seat Garage, Garage/Shop, Water Tower Pump House, Overseer's House, Worker's House #2, Worker's House #2 Garage, and Main Path Tobacco Barn #2. These resources will be considered for retention and restoration on a case-by-case basis as the park is developed.

Interpretive trails at the Farm Seat should be fully ADA accessible using universal design concepts with areas for resting and include a combination of waysides, signs, displays, and actual objects that can be touched and explored. Interpretive trails will include information about historic structures, meadow insects, woodland edge habitat, the North Carolina Ecosystem Enhancement Program project and stream restoration, sustainable farming practices, scientific agriculture as well as many other topics. A spur trail into the NCEEP restoration area will offer several interpretive opportunities to the public.



Figure 9.7 - McCormick Bridge Road Trailhead

McCormick Bridge Road Trailhead

A trailhead off of McCormick Bridge Road will be the location of parking for 30 vehicles and eight equestrian trailer parking spaces, as shown in Figure 9.7. The trailhead would serve the multi-use trail that is the mid-point between Long Valley Farm and the Sandhills Section. The development of this area is land dependent.

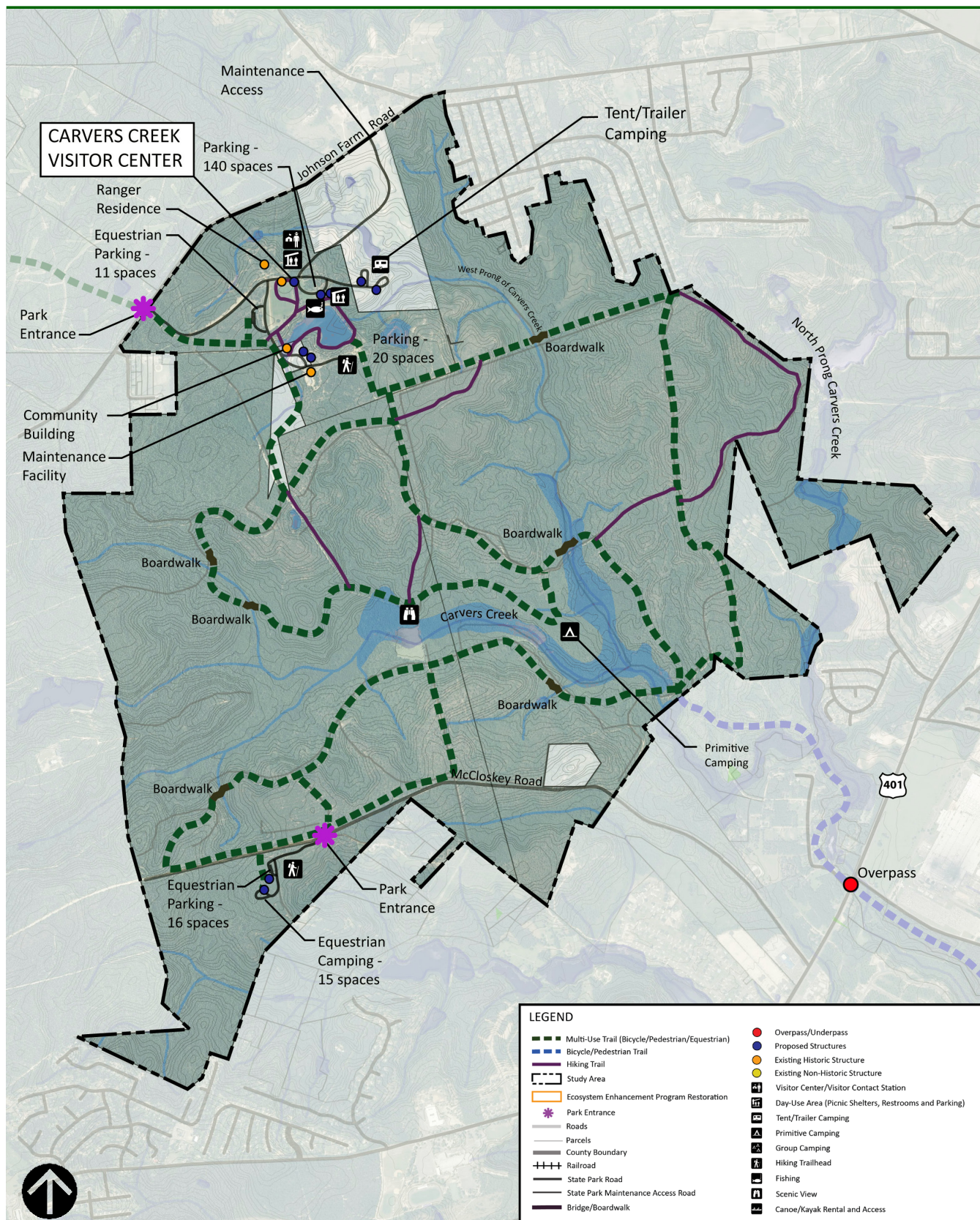


Figure 9.8 - Overall Plan of the Sandhills Section - Not to Scale

Sandhills Section

The Sandhills Section is centrally located within Carvers Creek State Park and is the location of the Visitor Center and an existing house that will become the Community Building. The park entrance is on Johnson Farm Road, and the internal circulation of roads and trails will link new park facilities and recreational activities. A secondary park entrance is located off of McCloskey Road to the south, where a second equestrian parking lot is located with a long term plan to include equestrian camping facilities. The main entrance utilizes the existing driveway corridor to reduce the need for clearing and grading. The road winds through existing trees and as the park visitor rounds a curve, the existing large rustic barn and the new Visitor Center comes into view across an open meadow. This main drive continues to the Visitor Center, the accessible fishing pier at the pond edge, shelters and restroom, and the camping areas. Another park road turns south before the meadow to the equestrian trailer parking lot, the Community Building, the trailhead parking lot, and primitive camping access points.

Recreational activities, such as primitive and tent/trailer camping, fishing, equestrian and pedestrian trail access, picnicking, hiking, and open play, are included at the Sandhills Section. Interpretation of the Sandhills ecosystem will be the key focus of the site. See Figure 9.8 for the overall plan for the Sandhills Section.

Carvers Creek State Park Visitor Center

The architecture of the new Visitor Center will be inspired by existing and typical Cumberland County farm buildings. The building will be designed using green building strategies with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) certification as a goal. Green building techniques, such as daylighting, ventilation, solar power, and stormwater reuse, will offer additional interpretive opportunities for visitors. The Visitor Center can be a teaching facility for citizens in the community about ways to implement environmentally friendly features in their homes and neighborhoods. Exterior spaces around the building will allow for staging of school groups and outdoor classrooms. Interior spaces will include exhibit spaces, auditorium, concession, gift shop, small meeting room and classroom, restrooms, reception area and offices, as well as storage and mechanical areas. A drop off and 70 parking spaces are located adjacent to the Visitor Center. Overflow parking and parking for the accessible fishing pier, restroom, and two shelters totals another 70 spaces. Figures 9.9 and 9.10 show the Visitor Center and camping facilities at Sandhills.

Community Building and Other Facilities

Because the park will include both the Visitor Center and the Community Building, the building footprint of the Visitor Center can be smaller. Some functions that ordinarily would be located in the Visitor Center, such as large meeting spaces and storage, will be located at the Community Building instead. The following is a list of the existing buildings and structures that will remain at the park:

- Community Building - The existing house will be renovated to become



Existing maintenance buildings at the Sandhills Section



Existing large rustic barn



Longleaf pine ecosystem restoration areas

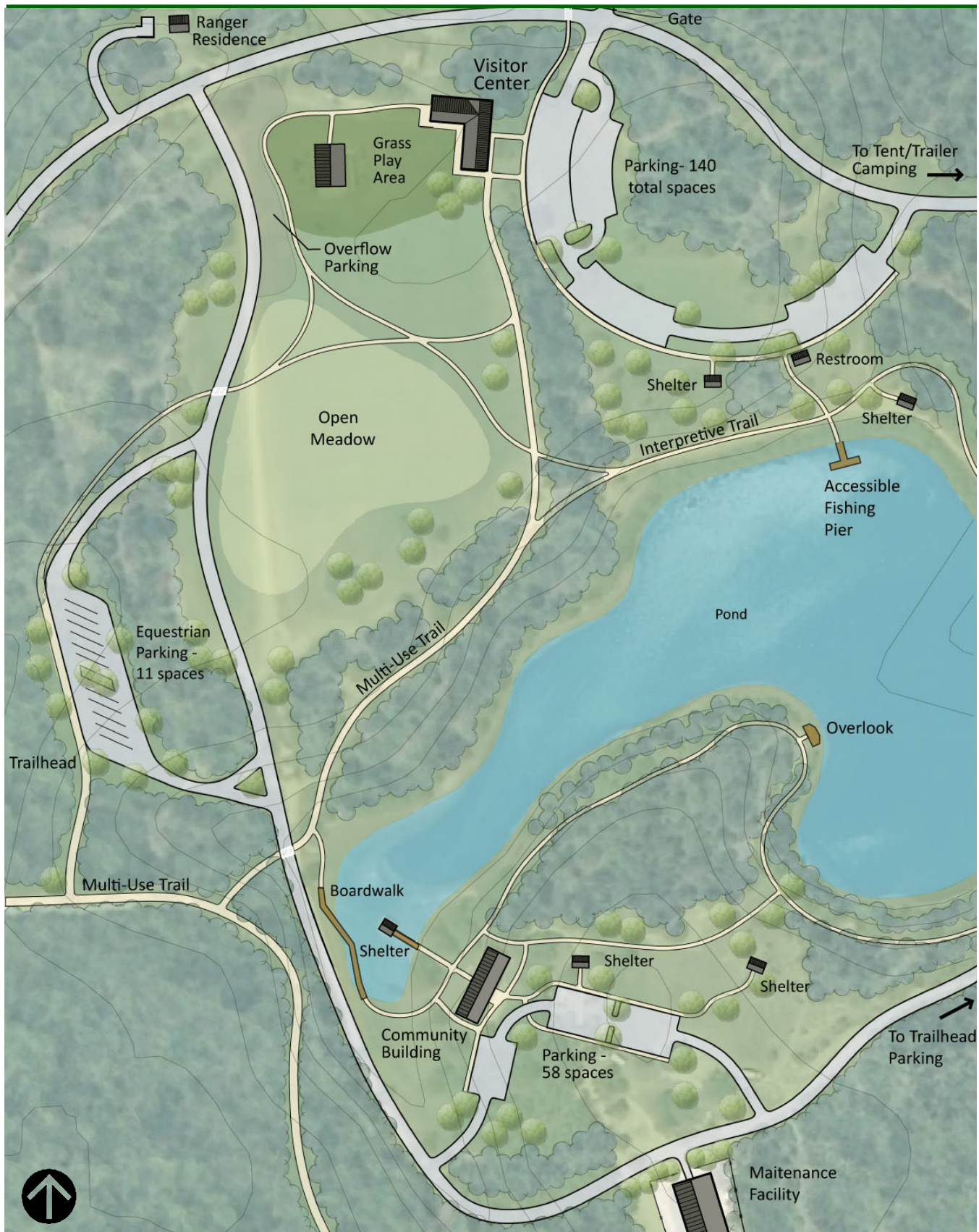


Figure 9.9 - Visitor Center and Community Building - Not to Scale

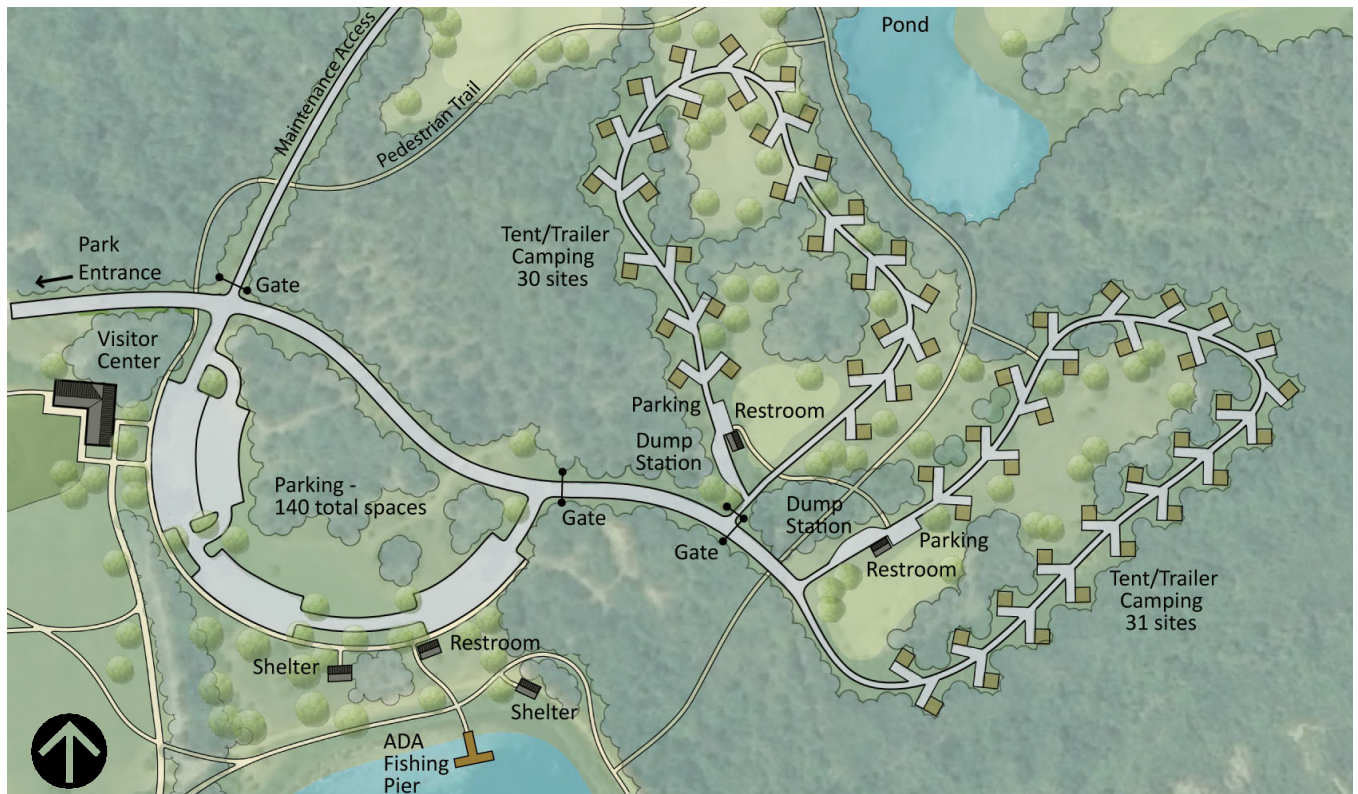


Figure 9.10 - Camping Areas - Not to Scale

a community building that will include meeting space, exhibit space, storage, and restrooms. Parking can accommodate 58 spaces. Scenic views across the pond will make this a popular rental space as well. Murals and artwork representing the Sandhills can be shown inside. The public could enjoy traveling exhibits and events such as wildlife photography, and acoustic music and guest speakers. An interpretive boardwalk, the pond shelter, and two picnic shelters will surround the Community Building.

- **Maintenance Facility** - The existing maintenance buildings will remain to form the basis for a large maintenance facility for Carvers Creek State Park. Additional fencing and screening will be needed to keep the area secure and obscured from view.
- **Barn** - The existing barn will be restored to serve as a rental space for large family gatherings, community classes, nature and art exhibits, school groups, and storage. The Barn and the Visitor Center will relate to one another architecturally and the open space between the two structures will be used by school groups and other visitors.

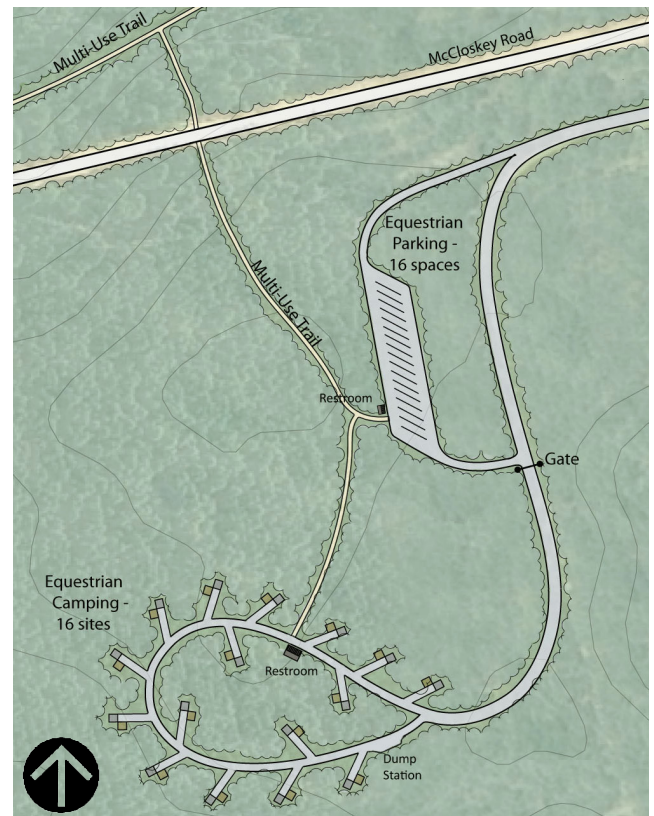


Figure 9.11 - Equestrian Camping - Not to Scale

Camping facilities at Sandhills include tent and trailer camping and primitive camping. Two loops of tent and trailer camping offer 61 campsites, complete with two restrooms, two pump stations, and parking areas. Campsites will be sited to take advantage of scenic views of existing vegetation, the small pond, and meadows. See Figure 9.10. Primitive camping facilities are located in a more secluded area, in a peninsula of land surrounded by Carvers Creek.

- Interpretive trails at the Sandhills Section should be accessible and have areas for resting. Boardwalks and overlooks take advantage of the lake and creek ecosystem. The ecological focus of the Sandhills will be expressed by the interpretive displays and exhibits. The longleaf pine ecosystem, fire ecology, forest restoration and management, plantation pine restoration, land stewardship, and water quality studies are all appropriate interpretive opportunities for the Sandhills Section.
- Equestrian parking and equestrian camping facilities are planned off of McCloskey Road. The facility will include 16 campsites, a restroom, dump station, and parking area. See figure 9.11.

Cape Fear River Section

The Cape Fear River Section is located at the eastern edge of the park, adjacent to the Cape Fear River. The park entrance is located on Carvers Falls Road and the internal road circulation follows existing roads. A ranger resi-

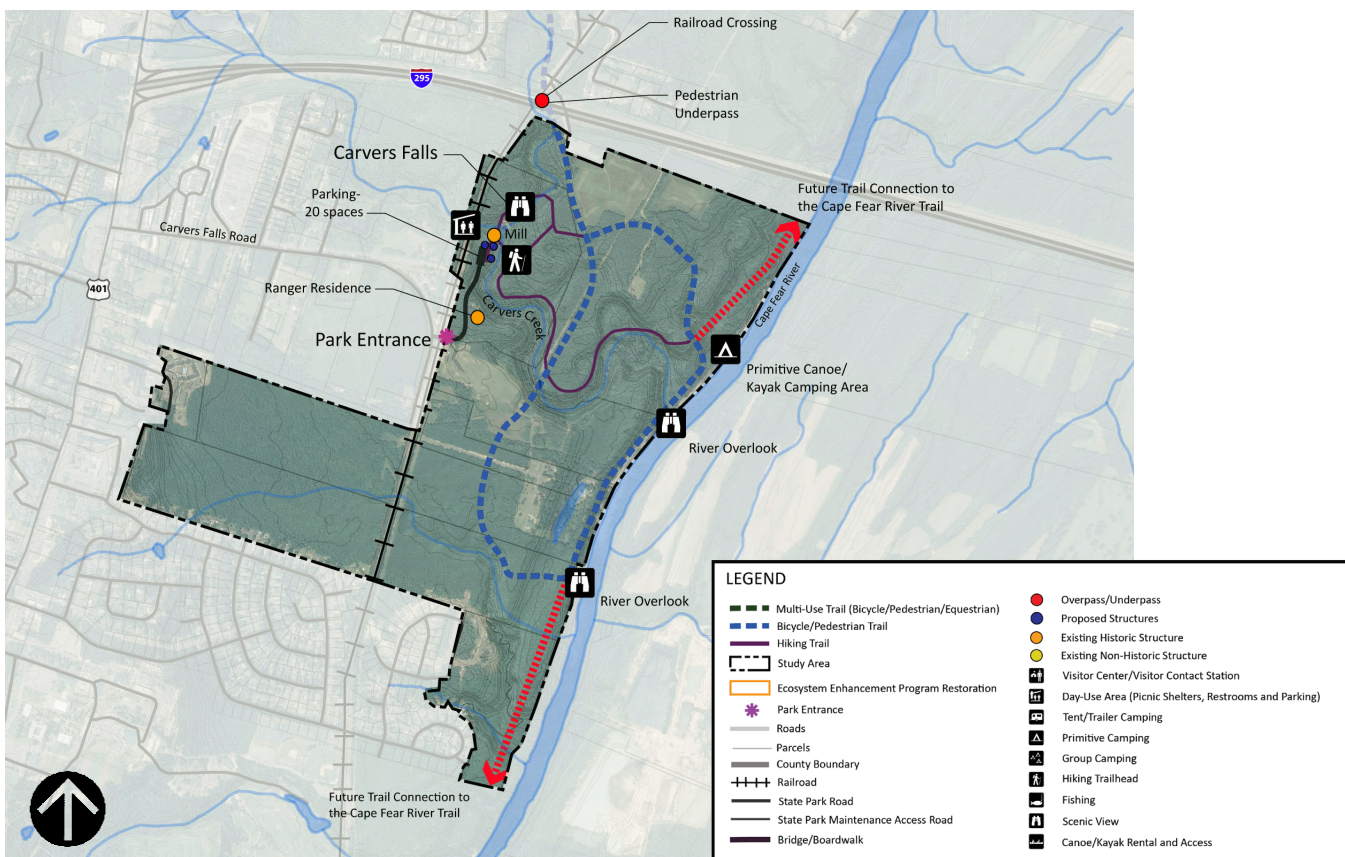


Figure 9.12 - Overall Plan of the Cape Fear River Section - Not to Scale

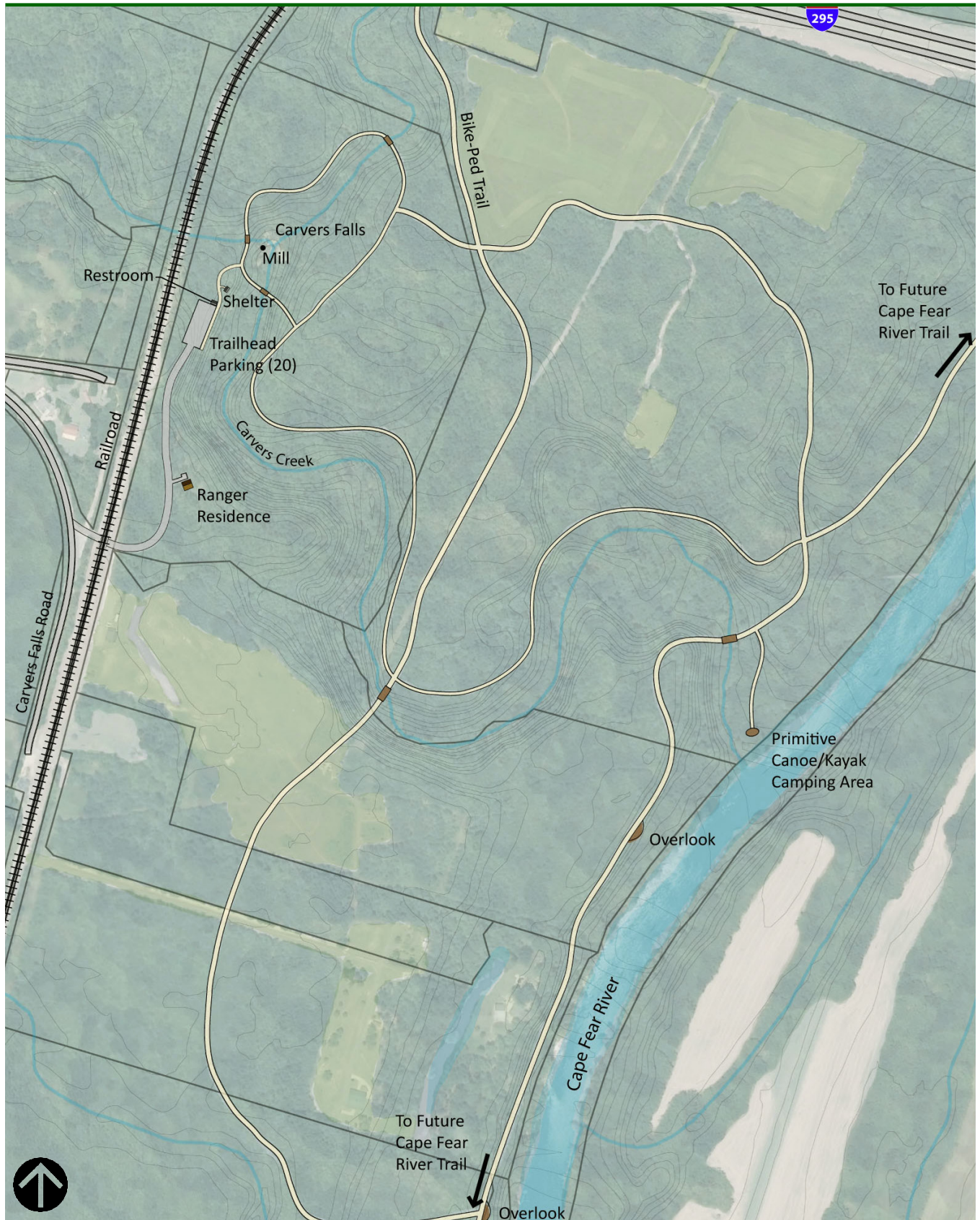
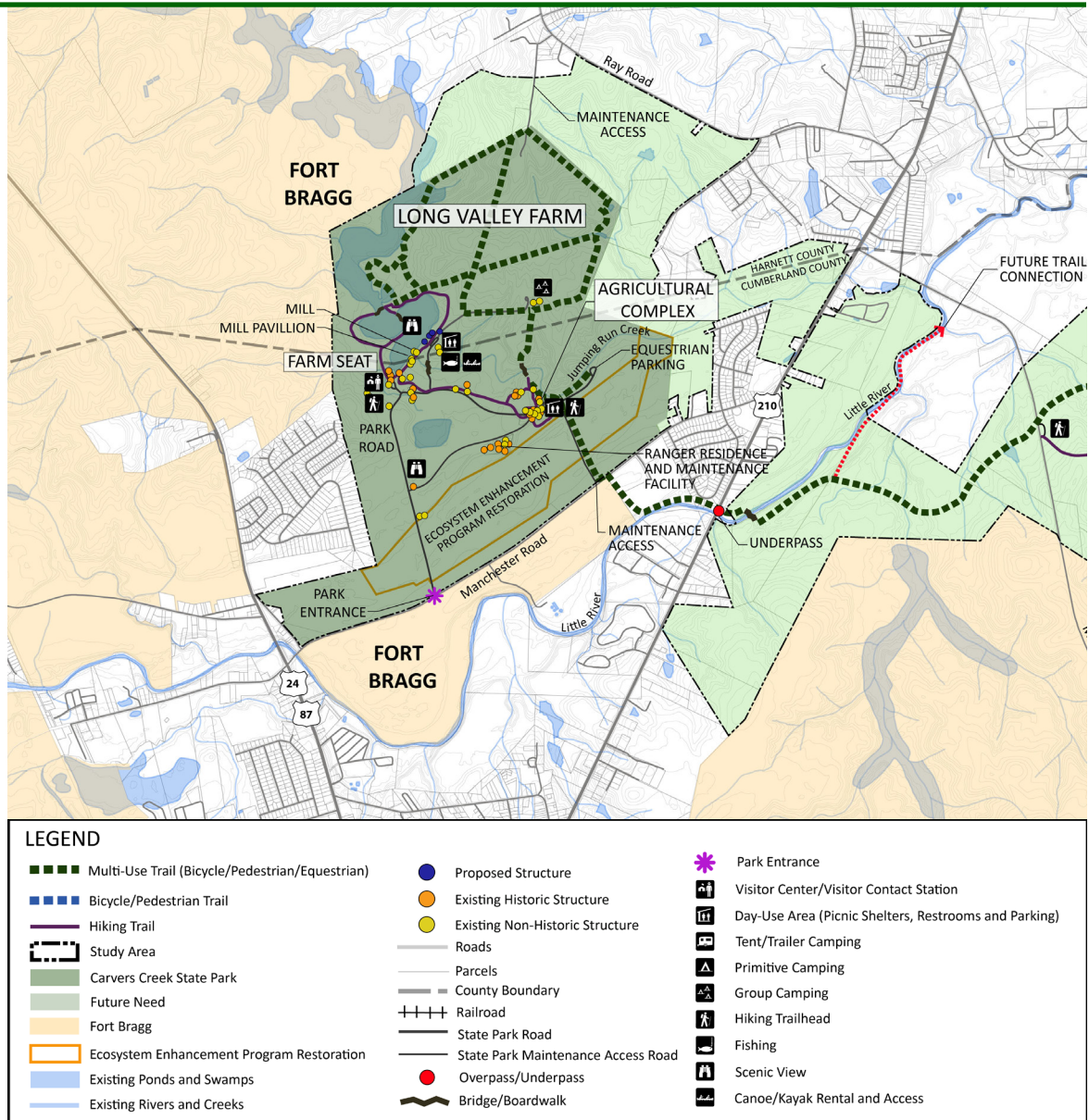


Figure 9.13 - Cape Fear River Section Plan - Not to Scale



dence will be located in one of the existing houses on the property. The park entrance drive will extend past the ranger residence to a day-use parking area for 20 vehicles. The day-use area includes a restroom, picnic shelter, and trailhead. Carvers Falls and the Cape Fear River will be accessible by trails. The main trail will extend through the site and end in a long loop at the Cape Fear River. Two river overlooks will be located along the river, as well as a primitive canoe/kayak camping area. See Figure 9.12 for the overall plan for the Cape Fear River Section.

Activities that will be offered at the Cape Fear River Section include enjoying scenic views of Carvers Falls and the Cape Fear River, fishing, bicycling, canoe/kayak access and camping, hiking, open play, interpretive trails, and picnicking. Figure 9.13 shows the plan in more detail.

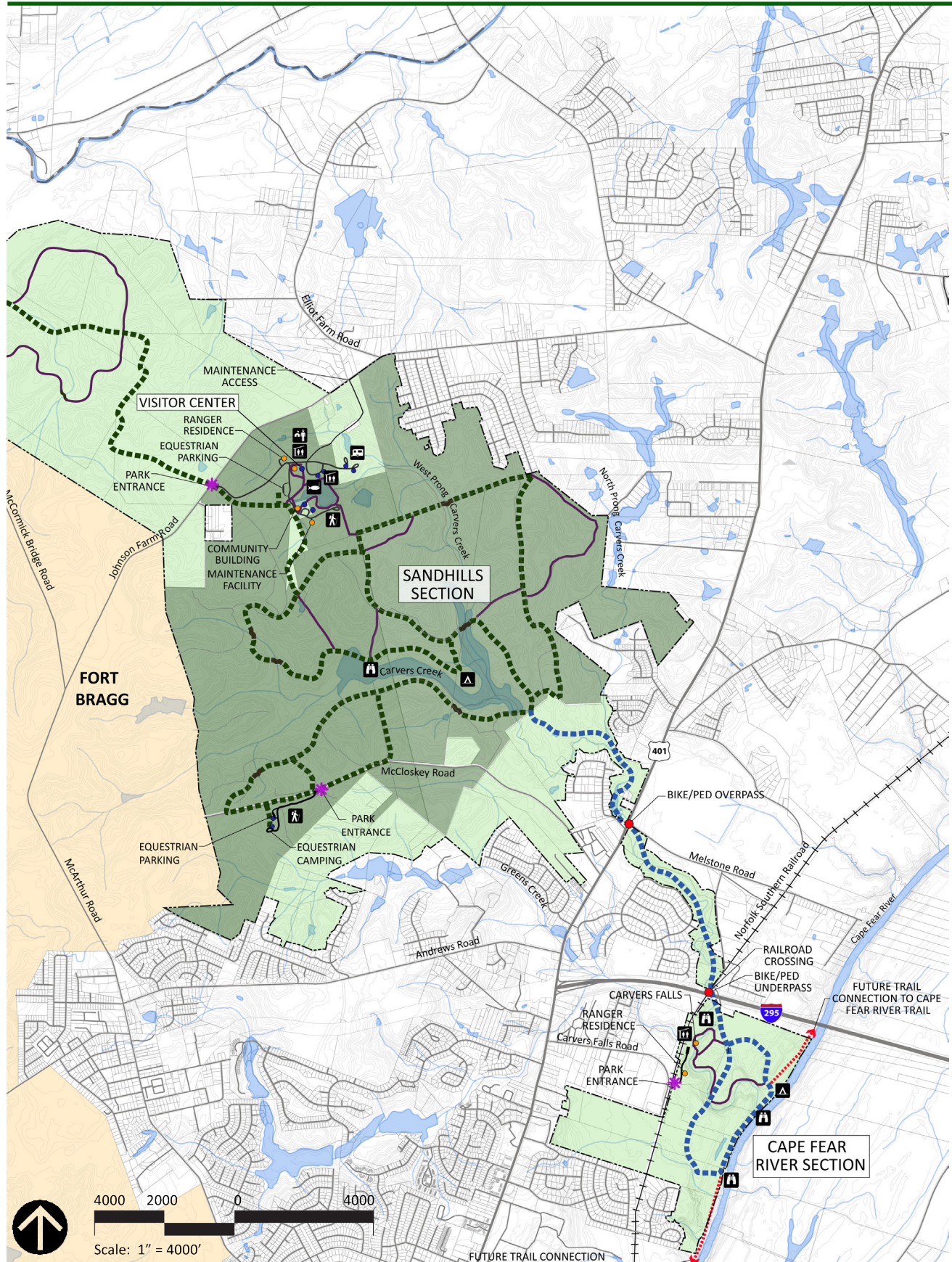


Figure 9.14 - Trail Network Map



Existing hiking trails at the Sandhills Section



Location of pedestrian underpass at NC 210

Trail Network

Natural resource protection, sustainability, accessibility, and connectivity are the primary goals of trail development within the park. Because the park is located in a rapidly developing area, connectivity to other parks and trail systems on a state, regional and local level is crucial for the success of this state park. In this master plan, a conceptual network of trails with different levels of intensity is shown. Maps and text represent an approximation of trail layout and design. On-site field verification and sustainable planning practices will be used to determine actual trail system design and construction.

A multi-use trail for equestrians, bicyclists, and pedestrians spans the length of the park. A portion of this trail from the Sandhills Section southeastern boundary to the Cape Fear River is not acceptable for equestrian use. With two on-grade road crossings on busy roads, such as US 401 and the Norfolk Southern Railroad, the consultant and the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation staff determined that equestrian road crossings were not appropriate. Nonetheless, this main trail will connect the major facilities in the park for bicyclists and pedestrians from Long Valley Farm to the Cape Fear River.

Other trails will include pedestrian and bicycle trails, interpretive trails, and natural surface trails in less developed areas. Whenever possible, existing trails, farm roads, and fire maintenance access roads will be used for trail alignments in order to reduce the need for clearing. The trail network will include trails that are accessible for visitors that have mobility and other impairments to allow for use by a broad range of park visitors. Trail signs and interpretive waysides along trails will be placed in areas with educational information about the natural environment as well as historical interpretation. In highly sensitive areas, such as wetlands and stream corridors, boardwalks and overlooks will be built to allow park users another way to experience the site.

With a network of a variety of trails, users will be able to design their park experience to utilize trails that suit their level of accessibility, agility, and time availability. See Figure 9.14 for the trail network planned for Carvers Creek State Park.

Summary of Trail Network

- Approximately 22 miles of multi-use trails (equestrian/bicycle/pedestrian)
- Approximately four miles of bicycle/pedestrian trails
- Approximately eight miles of hiking trails
- Pedestrian underpass at NC 210 and I-295
- Road crossing at McCormick Bridge Road and Johnson Farm Road
- Pedestrian overpass at US 401

Trail Types

Multi-use Trail

Multi-use trails will be developed in corridors that are capable of supporting a broader range of users and will be designed to accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, and equestrians. On-site field verification will provide information to determine width, surface and proper sight lines to ensure user safety and reduce conflict.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Trail

This type of trail will be developed in corridors that are capable of supporting bicycle and pedestrian uses. On-site field verification will provide information to determine width, surface and proper sight lines to ensure user safety and reduce conflict between types of users.

Utilities

The water supply for Long Valley Farm will be provided by a six-inch water extension off an existing 24-inch line owned by Harnett County. The six-inch water line would provide a loop for fire suppression and potable water through the farm area and reconnect on the east side of the millpond to an existing line running to Fort Bragg.

The sanitary sewer for this portion of the park will be provided by septic systems which will need to be approved by Cumberland County. If construction of the water line extension were delayed, then the existing five wells on the site could be used as a water supply.

The water supply for the Sandhills Section will require an extension of the existing Harnett County water line for approximately one mile to the park entrance drive. An additional 1.5 miles of water line would be required through the park for fire suppression and potable water use. No sewer is available at this time, so and septic systems would be utilized.

Power will be supplied by Progress Energy, utilizing the lines that are already serving the existing buildings within the park.

Summary of Development Costs

Long Valley Farm

• Day-Use Development – Phase I	\$1,103,000
• Day-Use Development – Phase II	\$2,488,000
• Farm Seat Renovation	\$2,358,505
• Group Camp	\$473,250
• Agricultural Complex Renovation	\$1,284,000
• Multiuse Trailhead and Trail Improvements	\$640,000
• Maintenance Area Improvements	\$85,400

Total for Long Valley Farm	\$8,432,155
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Sandhills Section

• Multiuse Trailhead and Trail Improvements	\$1,190,000
• Equestrian Campground	\$1,340,500
• McCormick Trailhead – land dependent	\$183,750
• Visitor Center and initial site development	\$6,083,000
• Maintenance Area Improvements	\$1,161,500
• Community Building and Day-Use – land dependent	\$1,087,500
• Tent and Trailer Campground – Loop 1 – land dependent	\$1,857,500
• Tent and Trailer Campground – Loop 2 – land dependent	\$1,461,500
• Ranger Residence	\$240,000

Total for Sandhills Section	\$14,605,250
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Carvers Falls Section

• Cape Fear River Section Trail Connection – land dependent	\$2,135,000
• Cape Fear River Section Development – land dependent	\$2,698,000

Total for Cape Fear River Section	\$4,833,000
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Total for entire park development:	\$27,870,405
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